

to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too principled for that!

*Lady Windermere.* [Interrupting^ *Duchess,* *Duchess,* it's impossible! [Rising and crossing stage to C.~] We are only two years. Our child is but six months old.

*Duchess of Berwick.* Ah, the dear pretty baby! [Sits in chair R of L table, *How* is the little darling? Is it a boy or a girl? I hope a girl—Ah, I remember it's a boy. I'm so sorry. Boys are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months—I really don't know what they teach them there.

*Lady Windermere.* Are all men bad?

*Duchess of Berwick.* Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

*Lady Windermere.* Windermere and I married for love.

*Duchess of Berwick.* Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that mad'd me accept him at all, and before the year was out, he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every colour, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character. No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though—it was most unfortunate. [Rises.] And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

*Lady Windermere.* Come back to me?

[C.]

*Duchess of Berwick.* [L C.] Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes, men hate them!

*Lady Windermere.* It is very kind of you. *Duchess,* to come and tell me all this. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

*Duchess of Berwick.* Pretty child! I was like that once. Now